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STEVENSON STAYS

By Robert J. Donovan
 Chief Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON.

Ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson was embroiled in a controversy yesterday over a magazine article that had earmarks of an overture to Mr. Stevenson to resign his post at the United Nations.

Privately, however, a very high official of the government said that President Kennedy would keep Mr. Stevenson at the UN. This same official denied that the article was the vehicle of a "dump Stevenson" movement.

Publicly, White House press secretary Pierre Salinger said that there was "absolutely no question" that Mr. Stevenson would remain a United States permanent representative to the UN.

The affair, however, must leave Mr. Stevenson in a somewhat uncomfortable position for a number of reasons.

One is that the article appearing in The Saturday Evening Post says that Mr. Stevenson was the sole dissenter among the President's advisers on the proposal to blockade Cuba in October. It reports that he preferred a political to a military solution to the problem posed by the Soviet missiles. Through a spokesman in New York, Mr.

Stevenson described the article as "inaccurate and untrue."

Another reason why the article is peculiarly embarrassing to Mr. Stevenson is that it was written by two reporters, Stewart Alsop and Charles L. Bartlett, who are known to be very close to the President personally. Mr. Bartlett in fact is a member of Mr. Kennedy's small circle of uniquely intimate friends. Moreover, he was the first to report that Chester Bowles was under fire as Under Secretary of State.

That story appeared in July, 1961, in The Chattanooga Times, whose Washington bureau Mr. Bartlett heads. As was the case yesterday, Mr. Salinger was soon saying that Mr. Bowles was remaining on the job. Mr. Salinger did not say, however, for how long. Because of the authorship of the story Mr. Bowles' friends were dismayed. They had good reason to be. Four months later the President dismissed Mr. Bowles as Under Secretary and shifted him to a newly created post as special Presidential representative and adviser on underdeveloped nations.

The Post article purports to give an inside account of events leading up to the President's decision to blockade offensive weapons bound for Cuba after the discovery of the Russian missiles.

By Saturday, Oct. 20, the article says, a consensus had developed in the executive committee of the National Security Council under the leadership of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara in favor of blockade. Messrs. Alsop and Bartlett wrote:

"Only Adlai Stevenson, who flew down from New York on Saturday, dissented from the ex-comm (executive committee) consensus. There is disagreement in retrospect about what Stevenson really wanted. 'Adlai wanted a Munich,' says a non-admiring official who learned of his proposal. 'He wanted to trade the Turkish, Italian and British missile bases for the Cuban bases.'

"The Stevenson camp maintains that Stevenson was only willing to discuss Guantanamo and the European bases with the Communists after a neutralization of the Cuban missiles. But there seems to be no doubt that he preferred political negotiation to the alternative of military action. White House aid Arthur Schlesinger was assigned to write the uncompromising speech which Stevenson delivered at the UN on Tuesday, and tough-minded John McCloy was summoned from a business conference in Germany to work with Stevenson in the UN negotiations.

"In any case, the President heard Stevenson out politely and then gave his semi-final approval to the McNamara plan. He gave his final approval Sunday."

a number of years." When a reporter asked if he thought the article was an effort to undermine him, he replied, "no."

He would not expand upon the advice he gave at the time of the crisis on the ground that an adviser's words to the President are confidential.

"The facts are," he said, "that I never proposed to trade our bases abroad to get the Soviets out of their missile bases in Cuba and that I favored the blockade on the shipment of more Soviet arms to Cuba."

Mr. Salinger, speaking with the President's approval, said:

"I can state flatly . . . that Ambassador Stevenson strongly supported the decision taken by the President on the quarantine and brilliantly developed the United States position at the United Nations during the days that followed."

This was not necessarily in conflict with the Post article. Messrs. Alsop and Bartlett said that Mr. Stevenson dissented during the decision-making stage; they did not allege that he failed to support the decision once Mr. Kennedy had made it.

Reporters wanted to know of Mr. Salinger if Mr. Stevenson would remain as Ambassador.

"There is absolutely no doubt about it," he replied.

At least this seemed more emphatic than his comment on Mr. Bowles' situation after the earlier Bartlett article. "His resignation is not currently expected," Mr. Salinger said then. Yesterday he did not use such expressions as "currently" or "for the time being" in relation to Mr. Stevenson.

When a reporter asked whether Mr. Stevenson would remain indefinitely and whether the President was "happy" with him at the UN post, the press secretary retorted, "if he was not happy with him, do you think he would keep him there?"

Mr. Stevenson was at the White House yesterday morning for an NSC meeting. A reporter asked him later if he had discussed the matter with the President.

"The President brought it up and told me about the statement he is going to issue," Mr. Stevenson said. This referred to the comments subsequently made by Mr. Salinger.

In New York, Clay Blair Jr., editorial director of the Curtis Publishing Co., which owns The Post, said:

"Mr. Alsop and Mr. Bartlett were told by a number of reliable sources of high position in the government that Ambassador Stevenson advocated concessions to the Soviets far beyond what any member of the executive committee of the National Security Council and other top Administration advisers were prepared to consider."

The President and Mr. Stevenson were rivals for the Democratic nomination in 1960. Mr. Kennedy, it seems, was irked beyond words that Mr. Stevenson allowed his delegates to keep the convention in an uproar of demonstrations even after it was clear that the Senator from Massachusetts was going to win.

The distinct impression in Washington is that the President and his family have never liked Mr. Stevenson very much but have learned to live with him and to use his talents.

Mr. Stevenson had wanted to be Secretary of State in the Kennedy administration. Mr. Kennedy offered him the UN post instead, and then had to wait impatiently while Mr. Stevenson took his own good time in deciding to accept it.

In the 22 months that Mr. Stevenson has been at the UN his relations with the President seem to have improved.

As far as an outsider can judge he has never exerted a great influence on Administration policy. Even his role in the Bay of Pigs invasion reportedly was slight. Evidently, indeed, he was angry at the President for not having told him more about the plans before he defended in the UN pre-invasion air raids on Cuba as the handiwork of defecting Cuban Air Force officers. The fact was, of course, that the planes were part of the anti-Castro forces that were marshaled with the assistance of the Central Intelligence Agency.

defense of the blockade was highly praised within the Administration and won him grudging approval even from his severest critics.

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